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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 05, 2007

Public Information: Virginija Morgan

Email: VMorgan@usaid.gov

<http://centralasia.usaid.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AND TAJIKISTAN CONTINUE COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN. On November 02, 2007 Mr. Abdujabbor Rahmonov, Minister of Education, of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. William Frej, Regional Mission Director, U.S. Agency for International Development for the Central Asian Republics (USAID/CAR) and Mr. John Dreire, Chief of Party, Creative Associate International Inc., USAID School Quality Learning Project, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on School Quality Learning Project (SQLP) programmed for the period of 2007-2012.

The new agreement lays out the intent of the United States Government to continue cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan to improve the access to quality of education. William Frej noted at the signing ceremony that education is a centerpiece of the U.S. Government's development strategy and thus is allocating funds to support Tajikistan in the implementation of its National Education Strategy and the international cooperative effort, "Education for All Fast Track Initiative Catalytic fund grant."

The SQLP is the second regional project implemented in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan will expand access to quality primary and secondary education. Project activities will be built on achievements and lessons learned through previous USAID basic education projects such as PEAKS, IBET/ISET, and Step by Step. The new project will continue efforts to improve teacher/student outcomes through: expanding access to teacher training in interactive, learner centered methods; increasing usage of assessment methodologies that better measure outcomes of interactive, learner-centered methods; active participation of teachers in curriculum development; and support for expansion of new school finance mechanism which improve equity and efficiency in use of existing financial resources.

USAID's implementing partner Creative Associates International Inc. possesses wide experience and expertise managing diverse projects worldwide and will work closely with the Government of Tajikistan to implement the program.

USAID assistance in basic education already impacts more than 58,000 students studying in 104 schools throughout the country.

The School Quality Learning Project is one of the many assistance projects implemented in Tajikistan by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on behalf of the American people. Since 1993 the American people through USAID have provided more than \$270 million in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and education systems of Tajikistan.

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